

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 /077 W

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R 260915Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7177

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1453

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CE, CH

SUBJ: VISIT OF MADAM TENG YING-CHOU TO SRI LANKA, APRIL

17-22, 1977

REF: PEKING 0798

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA WENT ALL OUT IN WELCOMING MADAM TENG YING-CHOU AND PARTY OF 19 TO SRI LANKA, GIVING THEM RED CARPET TREATMENT ALL THE WAY. THE ARRIVAL CEREMONY AT THE AIRPORT WAS DESCRIBED AS THE MOST ELABORATE SEEN HERE IN SOME TIME AND PRESS COVERAGE OF VISIT WAS MORE EXTENSIVE AND PROMINENT THAN IS USUAL FOR HIGH RANKING VISITS.

2. MADAM TENG STAYED AT THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE AND IN THE COURSE OF HER FOUR AND ONE-HALF DAY VISIT MET WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER, ATTENDED SEVERAL BANQUETS AND LUNCHEONS, AND WENT SIGHTSEEING TO KANDY AND TO SOME OF THE ATTRACTIONS IN COLOMBO. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MDFA) OFFICIAL, ALL EVENTS WERE PURELY CEREMONIAL; THERE WERE NO WORKING MEETINGS AND NO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS DURING ANY OF THE COURTESY CALLS.

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3. MADAM TENG IN HER PUBLIC ADDRESSES PAID HOMAGE TO THE LONG, CLOSE, AND IMPERISHABLE TIES BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF CHINA AND SRI LANKA, CITING THEIR SIMILAR HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES AND THEIR PRESENT TASKS OF OPPOSING IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND HEGEMONISM. SHE LAVISHLY PRAISED THE PM'S LEADERSHIP IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND HER PROPOSAL FOR DECLARING THE

INDIAN OCEAN A ZONE OF PEACE, WHICH SHE SAID REFLECTS THE COMMON DESIRES OF THE LITTORAL NATIONS TO SAFEGUARD THEIR INDEPENDENCE. SHE SAID TOO THAT THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY INTENSE AND THAT THE FACTORS OF WAR ARE ON THE INCREASE BUT THAT IT IS NOT THE SUPERPOWERS BUT THE PEOPLES OF ALL COUNTRIES THAT DECIDE THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD. THE SITUATION IN ASIA, SHE AVERRED, LIKE THAT OF THE WORLD, IS DEVELOPING IN A DIRECTION FAVORABLE TO THE PEOPLE AND UNFAVORABLE TO BIG POWER HEGEMONISM. IN SEVERAL SPEECHES, MADAM TENG LASHED OUT AT THE GROUP OF FOUR, SAYING THAT THEIR PLOT TO USURP SUPREME AND STATE LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN SMASHED BY CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG AND THAT THE CHINESE PETWLE HAVEH ADE UP AND ARE STILL MAKING UP FOR THE SERIOUS LOSSES CAUSED BY NATURAL DISASTERS AND THE SABOTAGE OF THE GROUP OF FOUR.

4. REFTTEL GIVES CREDENCE TO SPECULATION HERE THAT MADAM TENG'S VISIT WAS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED BY THE PM TO GIVE A FILLIP TO HER FALTERING ELECTION CHANCES. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING TO AN EMBOFF THAT THE PM HAD INDEED RECENTLY RENEWED A LONG-STANDING INVITATION, AN MDFA OFFICIAL DOWNPLAYED THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT, ARGUING THAT SRI LANKAN VOTERS WILL VOTE ON LOCAL AND POCKET BOOK ISSUES, NOT ON INTER-NATIONAL ONES. MDFA OFFICIAL DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT PLANNED, MADAM TENG'S VISIT AND THE PROMINENCE OF SRI LANKA'S PEKING WING OF THE CP ON STAGE WITH HER WOULD TEND TO NEGATE ACCUSATIONS THAT THE PM HAS BEEN MOVING INCREASINGLY TO THE RIGHT.  
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5. MDFA OFFICIAL WAS PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS OF POLITICAL MOTIVES BEHIND THE VISIT, PERHAPS SPURRED BY A BLANTANTLY RUDE LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER ARTICLE SHARPLY CRITICIZING THE HIGH HONORS PAID TO A NON-OFFICIAL VISITOR, EVEN QUESTIONING MADAM TENG'S CAPACITY FOR POLITICAL THOUGHT BECAUSE OF HER AGE. MDFA DEFENDED THE ALMOST ROYAL TREATMENT GIVEN MADAM TENG BY SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH SHE HAS NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY INSTALLED, THE GSL VIEWS HER AS AN UNOFFICIAL HEAD OF STATE AND AS THE WIDOW OF CHOU EN-LAI, WHO WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED BY SRI LANKANS, SHE DESERVES SUCH TREATMENT.

6. MDFA DENIALS NOTWITHSTANDING, ON BALANCE WE BELIEVE VISIT WAS HASTILY ARRANGED PRIMARILY FOR ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT. THE CHINESE MAY ALSO HAVE SEEN THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MOSCOW'S EMBARRASSMENT WITH THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF THE MOSCOW-BACKED CP MEMBERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS INVITED AND ATTENDED THE STATE FUNCTIONS GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT

DECLINED THE CHINESE INVITATION TO ATTEND THEIR BANQUET  
FOR THE PM.

7. WUN CONTRAST TO THE HEAVY-HANDED RUSSIAN APPROACH HERE,  
THE CHINESE HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY LOW-KEY BUT EXTREMELY  
FRIENDLY IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH SRI LANKA, ALWAYS WILLING  
TO HELP BUT NEVER APPEARING TO POSE A THREAT TO THE COUNTRY'S  
SOVEREIGNTY. THIS IN LARGE MEASURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE OUT-  
POURING OF AFFECTION HERE FOR MADAM TENG. THE PM ALSO CASHED  
IN ON THE POPULARITY OF CHOU EN-LAI'S NAME WITH THE SRI LANKAN  
PEOPLE BY HAVING HIS WIDOW PLANT A TREE NEXT TO ONE CHOU HAD  
PLANTED IN KANDY AND BY HAVING HER APPEAR FOR SEVERAL  
FUNCTIONS AT THE BANDARANAIKE MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL CON-  
FERENCE HALL, A MAGNIFICANT STRUCTURE THAT CHOU WAS INSTRU-  
MENTAL IN HAVING THE CHINESE BUILD. THE PM WOULD HAVE BEEN  
HARD PUT TO HAVE CHOSEN A BETTER INSTRUMENT FOR HER DOMESTIC  
POLITICAL PURPOSES THAN MADAM TENG.  
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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009